

Mosley Makes It Clear: He Doesn't Need PEDs To Beat Mayweather

Written by Ron Borges

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Despite his own shadowy past, Shane Mosley is unafraid.

He's unafraid of Floyd Mayweather, Jr. and just as importantly he's unafraid of being asked to prove he's no longer using performance enhancing drugs, which is why he's in a position to prove he's unafraid of Mayweather and anything else to do with boxing.

The two of them will square off May 1 in Las Vegas in the biggest fight of the year to date, a bout between the two best welterweights in the world. Just as significantly, it will be the first fight where the participants are willingly submitting to random blood testing for PEDs, the Mayweather demand that proved to be the undoing of a potential \$40 million per man mega-fight this year between Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao.

Pacquiao's refusal to submit to random blood testing up to within a few days of their fight was, for reasons only he can know for sure, not something he was willing to do. His reasons included a fear of needles, a fear of being weakened by blood loss, a fear of this and a fear of that.

Mosley heard such excuses recently during a lengthy interview with TSS and laughed. He didn't say he thought Pacquiao was lying. He didn't say anything about Pacquiao. What he said instead was about himself but it seemed to make all things clear on the matter.

"I'm not afraid of needles," Mosley said, grinning. "I'm not afraid of blood tests. They can show up at my doorstep in Big Bear (the mountain retreat east of L.A. where he will train) at 3 a.m. I have no problem being tested.

"I think it's a good thing, to tell you the truth. There are track people and baseball players (using). These (strength and conditioning) trainers come in and act like they're doing something for the athletes. We don't need them. Boxing needs to stay with the old (training) style. The worst part of my career was when I had a sports trainer. I lost five times."

He also beat Oscar De La Hoya and in his preparation for their second fight later learned he'd used EPO (blood doping) as well as "the clear" and "the cream," two nearly undetectable forms of steroids provided to him by his former strength and conditioning trainer Darryl Hudson and Victor Conte, who ran the notorious BALCO lab that was the center of the Barry Bonds and Marion Jones steroid controversies.

Mosley admitted under oath to a Federal grand jury that he'd injected himself with EPO and used both the clear and the cream but claimed he had no knowledge these were illegal PEDs. Conte and Hudson have disputed that and the story has lingered for six years, never seeming to go away.

Hudson and Mosley have an ongoing legal battle over the issue and Conte has served time for his part in the distribution of the illegal drugs to a number of professional athletes including

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Mosley. But now, in the weeks and months leading up to one of the biggest fights of his career, the 38-year-old WBA champion seems eager to not only face Mayweather but also to prove all he needs to win are the performance enhancers given to him at birth and developed over nearly 30 years in boxing.

"I feel insulted I'm still talking about BALCO stuff," Mosley (46-5, 39 KO) said. "I never tested positive in 2003. If I was a juicer I would have been caught in 2003, 2004, 2006. It should have been erased.

"It's been put out there for media purposes. That's fine with me. I'm in a sport that is not really about strength any way. It's speed, timing and the mental side. You can be the strongest man but if you can't hit the guy nothing is going to happen. Floyd is a great fighter. He's smart. Being strong doesn't win Floyd fights."

The undefeated (40-0, 25 KO) Mayweather is still considered by many to be the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world despite having ceded that position to Pacquiao when he left the sport for a 21-month self-imposed exile. He came back in September and dominated one of the most skilled boxers in the world (and a long-time nemesis of Pacquiao's), Juan Manuel Marquez, in a fight that impressed many people in boxing, but Mosley was not among them.

It's not that Mosley doesn't respect Marquez, who is one of his stablemates at Golden Boy Promotions. It's simply that he and Mayweather are welterweights and Marquez is, well, a dozen pounds short of that.

"I'm the best welterweight in the world but taking myself out of the equation it's Pacquiao," Mosley said. "At least Manny fought (former WBO champion Miguel) Cotto. Cotto wasn't the best welterweight in the world but at least he fought a real welterweight.

"You can't come back and fight lightweights and junior welterweights (like Ricky Hatton). The last welterweight Floyd fought was Oscar and he'd been off for how long? You can't come back for two months and say you're a serious fighter."

Despite the fact Mosley hasn't fought in over a year he has been training for fights that never happened. The latest was with WBC champion Andre Berto, who was forced to pull out of their match after the destruction suffered in his native Haiti left him unable to mentally prepare for a boxing match when he had friends and relatives left homeless and abandoned.

Mosley understood and is thankful the fight did not come off not solely because it allowed him to open negotiations with Mayweather after the Pacquiao fight collapsed but because he saw in Berto something Berto didn't see in himself – a void.

"He's not ready for it (such a big fight) mentally," Mosley said. "I like Berto. I would have understood if he didn't want to fight me in the first place. He wasn't ready to fight me but he was willing to test himself.

"That's what you like to see in a young fighter. He wanted to fight me but I don't want to ruin a

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good young fighter. It's not a skill factor. Mentally he's not ready."

Mosley, on the other hand, is always ready. Or so it seems. At least he has been since ridding himself of Hudson and going back to the old ways in boxing – hitting bags, running, exercise, diet, sparring. Returning boxing to what it has always been – a sport of speed, wiliness and courage.

"I was always ready," Mosley said of his own career. "I wasn't ever intimidated. My first fight with Oscar people asked if I was intimidated. Why would I be afraid of something I wanted?"

"If they told me in my first professional fight to fight the champion, Phillip Holliday, I would have done it. And I would have won."

That confidence, competitive spirit and willingness to be tested (now in more ways than one) is what has kept Mosley at or near the top for so long. It is the same thing, he believes, that will return him there on May 1 in Las Vegas when he and Mayweather offer to the world what boxing needs – a big night at the fights.

"It's been very frustrating to sit there and watch different guys fight, but I was in the gym getting better and better," Mosley said assuredly. "I was fighting, just not in front of people."

The last time Mosley was in front of people it was at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on Jan. 24, 2009, the night Antonio Margarito was found wearing tampered hand wraps that the California Athletic Commission said were laced with a hardening agent similar to plaster of paris.

The wraps were removed and the fight went on, with Mosley dominating Margarito six months after Margarito beat Cotto half to death and less than a year since he'd done the same to Kermit Cintron. But on this night Margarito had no answers for the chin questions Mosley kept asking, questions that finally left Margarito totally beaten down after nine one-sided rounds.

Although Margarito was suspended for a year (and returns March 13 on the Pacquiao-Joshua Clottey card in Dallas) after the fight, Mosley insisted he had no hard feelings about his opponent's hardened handwraps and would willingly fight him again after he beats Mayweather and then grants Mayweather a contractually-obligated rematch that Mosley believes his opponent is going to need.

"So what?" Mosley said when asked his reaction to Margarito's effort to load his gloves. "He hit Cotto with them. A lot. How many times did he hit me?"

Told "None," Mosley beamed.

"Exactly," he said. "That would have made no difference. I would have murdered him the same way, loaded gloves or not."

Mosley feels the same about Mayweather. While he concedes Mayweather is a vastly talented

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fighter who is quick and a master of defense, he looks at him, then looks at himself and concludes what he always has felt and what he believes is unchanged today. In a boxing ring, or anywhere else within the sport, he rules.

"I think the match with me and Floyd is a mega-match," Mosley said quite rightly. "The real megafights are between the three or us (including Pacquiao), not with Clottey.

"I love to beat anyone out there. I love to challenge myself. That's my competitive nature. I've always been that way. I love to win."

Shane Mosley made evident how much when it was suggested that Mayweather had won the negotiation with Pacquiao because he ended up in a mega-fight in Vegas with him while Pacquiao ended up with a far less high profile opponent in Texas.

"I wouldn't say he won it," Mosley said, smiling. "I won it."

So did boxing, which won because two of the finest fighters in the world agreed to fight but not to fight the idea of coming in clean of anything but what God and training will give them. In Shane Mosley's opinion, that'll be quite enough, thanks.